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## **ISECRET**

Executive Registry

11 July 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Consultation with Mr. John A. McCone - 11 July 1973

- 1. Mr. John A. McCone asked that the following be conveyed to you:
- 2. He believes that a top calibre panel of analysts should be convened by the DCI to study the two following propositions:
  - 1) that the present emphasis by the Soviets on detente is merely a tactic to permit them to shore up their economic situation and to repair their political relations with Western nations, particularly Italy, France in Western Europe, and elsewhere in the world. During this period the Soviets can be expected to retain their present military strength and to improve it qualitatively as they have done in the past. They will watch with great interest the erosion of Western willingness to maintain a strong defense establishment and a growing obsession with domestic problems and a feeling that the Soviet bloc no longer offers a threat.
  - 2) Conversely, the present atmosphere of detente and the evident Soviet willingness to concentrate on domestic problems, both economic and political, may erode the strength of international Communism, both as an ideology and as a practical political force in the world. It is possible that such a period could culminate in the coming to power in the Soviet Union

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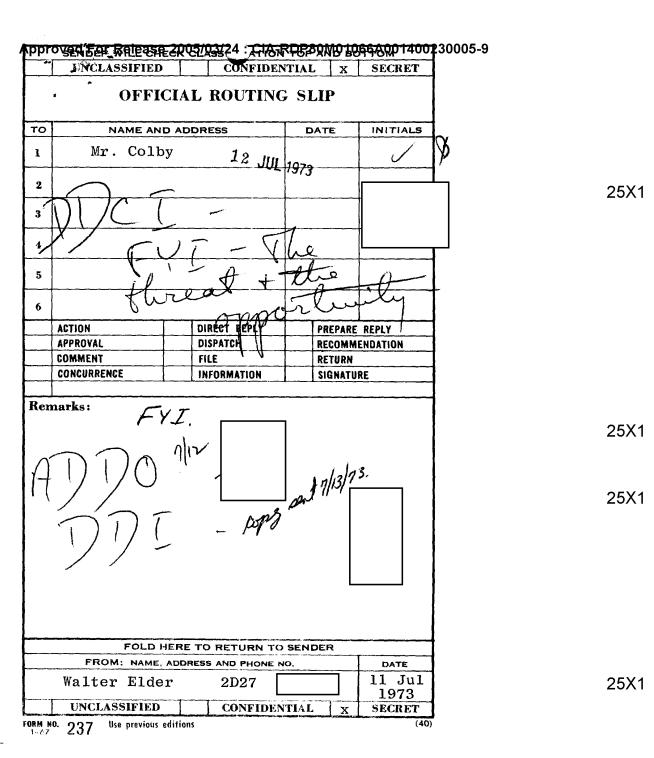
of a different form of government whose attitude toward the United States and the outside world is difficult to foresee.

- 3. I told Mr. McCone that one of the Soviet leaders had spoken to this point at a recent meeting in Czechoslovakia and that I was sure the appropriate analysts were aware of the murky shape of the future. I also told him that the Board of National Estimates as an institution would not have the form in the future that it has had in the past.
- 4. Mr. McCone confirmed to me that he is dropping his formal consultant relationship, and that you told him that his clearances would remain open. I outlined in general terms the nature of the History Program and told him that we would be working on both classified and unclassified versions of three important stories with which he was quite familiar and in which he had played a major role. These were (1) the Agency involvement with Cuba, (2) the Agency's involvement with Southeast Asia, and (3) the Agency's role in overhead reconnaissance. Mr. McCone seemed quite taken with the concept as I outlined it to him, and volunteered that I should make full use of any of his records which he had previously released to me for use in my draft history of his tenure as DCI.
- 5. Also for your information, he is being proposed by the White House as a member of the General Advisory Commission on Disarmament.
- 6. No problems arose, and I made no commitments on behalf of the Agency.

WALTER ELDER
Director, CIA History Program

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